

VZCZCXRO2315  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #2048/01 1681134  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 171134Z JUN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5115  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0038  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0007  
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0002  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002048

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2016

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SUBJECT: NINEWA VICE GOVERNOR SUGGESTS IRAQ MOVE AWAY FROM  
UNITY GOVERNMENT AND TOWARDS FEDERALISM FOR ALL

Classified By: PRT Leader Cameron Munter. Reasons 1.4 (B)  
and (D).

This is a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Ninewa  
cable, MOSUL 59, transmitted from BAGHDAD as Mosul no  
longer has record traffic capability.

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) After three years on the job Ninewa's vice  
governor, Khasro Goran, has proven to be a very polished  
and powerful politician with strong ties to the regional  
government in Iraqi Kurdistan. Goran, a Kurd, sees  
Iraq's future through a Kurdish lens. In his mind, the  
Kurds' Arab counterparts continue fighting and "moving  
backward" by electing sectarian officials, while the  
Kurds move forward by attracting foreign investment and  
adding to security and stability in the country. Because  
of the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG's) emphasis  
on secularism, discrimination is at a minimum and women  
and minorities have been invited to participate in all  
areas of the government. Goran suggests Iraq be  
partitioned into four separate federal units, including a  
Shia controlled south, a Sunni Arab west, Kurdish north,  
and a Brussels-style Baghdad. The real power would be in  
the units, however, but the union would allow the country  
to better protect itself from its neighbors. For this to  
happen, Goran believes the USG will have to change its  
unity government policy and re-think how it treats each  
major ethnic group in Iraq. End Summary.

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SECTARIANISM KEEPING A UNITED GOI FROM ADVANCING  
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¶2. (C) During a meeting with PolOff on June 15, Goran  
said he hoped the new GOI would do a better job than the  
last administration to keep the peace and provide  
security. However, he claimed, there were many obstacles  
that needed to be overcome: the Shia would have to  
realize they could not ram through programs and policies  
they preferred without consideration of other groups in  
the country. The Sunnis, on the other hand, would have  
to come to grips finally with their loss of hegemony.  
The Arabs were still "stuck in the past," unable to truly  
move away from the hard-line "religious zealots" in their  
parties that were shifting the central government towards  
sectarianism, he said. As long as fighting between those  
two groups persisted, said Goran, the Kurds would  
continue taking care of themselves. If needed, he said,

the Kurds would be happy to secede from the country. Goran claimed the Kurds were the only major group in Iraq that understood advancement depended on the separation of religious institutions from the state. It was the only way a society could create laws that were respectful to all religions, cultures and customs, he said. A secular state did not try to impose its religious views on anyone, said Goran, a point the Arabs failed to grasp.

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POLITICAL FUTURE OF IRAQ: FEDERALISM FOR ALL  
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13. (C) Goran said Iraq was faced with one of three choices: return to dictatorship, which was unlikely; move towards a true unity government, which so far was failing because of Sunni Arab and Shia violence and sectarianism; or create a country of separate federal units. Goran suggested Iraq could better function if federalism was agreed upon by the country's three major ethnic groups, with a Shia-controlled south, a Sunni Arab-led west, Kurdish north, and a "Brussels-style" arrangement in Baghdad. The political reality was that the change was already happening, he claimed, since violence was causing people to relocate to areas where they could live in the relative comfort with their own kind. Sunni and Shia had been fighting since the Shia broke away and followed Ali, said Goran; this was a war that had been going on for centuries. The Shia, a slight majority in the country, was now trying to get the all Iraqis to pledge to Ali during the call for prayer, claimed Goran. "Silly tactics" such as these prevented the country from progressing, he said. Goran believed if the USG could

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adjust its policy of creating a unity government in Iraq, by having a unique relationship with each major ethnic group, the outcome would benefit everyone, especially the U.S. and the Kurds.

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THE EVER-EXPANDING GREEN LINE  
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14. (C) "If you ask any Kurd he'll tell you he'd rather have his own country," Goran claimed. But such an outcome was unlikely in the near future because Iraq's neighbors, such as Turkey, Iran, and Syria, feared that Kurds in their countries would also call for independence, he said. Goran estimated there were 32 million Kurds throughout the region. He said he found it odd that smaller groups of people already had their own country, such as Serbia and Montenegro, whose population numbered about a third of all Kurds. Goran hoped the national census due in spring 2007 would bring about the implementation of Article 140 (TAL 58) of the constitution by deciding the future of Kirkuk. Constituents in areas such as Sinjar, Kirkuk, Zumar, Makhmour and minority areas of eastern Ninewa should be allowed a referendum vote to decide whether they too might wish to accede to the KRG. Polls conducted by the KRG in those areas already showed the people were shifting towards the KRG, he claimed. Goran said while parts of western Ninewa and eastern Mosul were attractive to the KRG, places like Tal Afar and western Mosul were not: "Tal Afar is too much trouble, and that's why we don't want any part of that city," he said.

15. (C) If the KRG were permitted to annex eastern Ninewa, for example, Goran claimed minorities would be better protected. The Kurds had a history of taking care of minorities in Iraq, he said, especially Christians discriminated against by the Arabs for centuries. The Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) party disliked the Kurds because the Kurds did not believe ADM spoke for all Christians in Iraq. The KRG was assisting smaller

Christian parties, and was a big supporter of the Orthodox and Catholic and indigenous Christian churches in Iraq. There were even three Christian ministers now serving in the KRG, a first in the history of the government, he said. Goran still believed the Yezidi were essentially Kurds, since Kurds were Yezidis that converted to Islam. And the Shabek were Kurds, contrary to what Shia coalition and national assemblyman, Dr. Hunain al-Qado claimed. "Al-Qado is an opportunist," said Goran, saying al-Qado could not get assurances from the Kurdish coalition before last year's national election so he joined with the Shia. Goran claimed to have video evidence of al-Qado saying all Shabek were Kurds during a speech in Irbil in 2004.

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COMMENT  
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¶6. (C) Goran's comments track with those we hear from some other Kurds, and even from other groups in northern Iraq. With additional numbers of Shia and Christians reportedly moving from southern Iraq and Baghdad to live with relatives in more peaceful areas of eastern Ninewa, for example, Goran has evidence to continue building the case for partitioning the country along ethnic lines. While he admitted he was not sure how such a partition would take place, or how a partitioned state would function, or how the national security forces would perform if called upon to protect the nation at a time of war, his statements reveal what many Kurds in Iraq say they really prefer: eventually, the dream of an independent Kurdistan; but in the short run, separation from the Arab conflicts of Sunni and Shia to the south.

SPECKHARD